

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4304

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: USINJC, EMIN, ETRA, IN

SUBJECT: GOI ESTABLISHES MICA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. ON FEBRUARY 20, 1976, THE GOI'S MINISTRY OF COMMERCE BY OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM SET UP A MICA ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF 23 MEMBERS FROM THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

2. UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF DEPUTY COMMERCE MINISTER, MR. VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH AND VICE CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE, DR. P.C. ALEXANDER, THE COMMITTEE IS TO ADVISE THE GOI ON MEASURES FOR (1) IMPROVING THE PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS OF MICA, (2) THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESSED AND FABRICATED MICA AND (3) THE PROMOTION OF MICA BASED INDUSTRIES AND EXPORT OF MICA PRODUCTS.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE TWO SENIOR COMMERCE OFFICIALS, THE COMMITTEE WILL INCLUDE THE JOINT SECRETARY DEALING WITH MICA IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF MITCO PLUS
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TEN OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS YET TO BE NAMED AND NINE MEMBERS

FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO REPRESENT THE COUNTRY'S LEADING DEALERS AND EXPORTERS OF MICA. THE COMMITTEE IS CONSTITUTED FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF TWO YEARS BUT WILL NOT DOUBT BE EXTENDED IN LIGHT OF THE GROWING CONCERN OF INDIA'S MICA TRADE. MEETINGS ARE TO BE ON A MONTHLY BASIS.

4. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE FIRST MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SOMETIME BEFORE THE END OF MARCH IS TO INCLUDE INTER-ALIA DISCUSSION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S CONCERN WITH THE GOI'S 40/60 SHARING ARRANGEMENT AND THE PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING SUCH A FORMULA. INDUSTRY MAY ALSO ATTEMPT TO SEEK SOME ASSURANCE FROM THE GOI THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO CHANNELIZE EXPORTS OF FABRICATED MICA. ANOTHER TOPIC THE COMMITTEE WILL EVENTUALLY GET AROUND TO DISCUSSING IS HOW TO GO ABOUT EXPANDING MICA BASED INDUSTRIES IN INDIA, ESPECIALLY MICA PAPER, WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE IMPORT OF US KNOW HOW.

COMMENT: THE RECENT DISRUPTION IN THE INDIAN MICA EXPORT TRADE STEMMING PRIMARILY FROM THE GOI'S CHANNELIZING OF MICA EXPORTS, WE BELIEVE, HAS BEEN THE MAIN REASON FOR SETTING UP OF THE MICA ADVISORY COMMITTEE. LIKEWISE THERE IS UNQUESTUONABLY A GROWING REALIZATION WITHIN THE GOI THAT EXPORTS OF MICA IN PROCESSED FORM GENERATE HIGHER EXPORT EARNINGS. THREATS FROM POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF MICA SUBSTITUTES AND THE GOI'S CONCERN NOT TO DEPEND ON THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE WORLD PROCESSED AND UNCUT MICA DEMAND SITUATIONS ARE THOUGHT TO BE OTHER REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING THIS COMMITTEE AT THIS TIME. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE - UNTIL NOW POLICY DECISION AFFECTING MICA RESTED PRIMARILY WITH GOI AND MITCO OFFICIALS HAVING RELATIVELY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MICA TRADE. HOPEFULLY, THE MICA INDUSTRY WILL NOW BENEFIT FROM THE INPUTS FROM ALL SECTORS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SAXBE

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